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BUILDING FOR FUTURE HEALTH

A radio discussion between Mrs. Lydia A. Lynde, and Miss Miriam Birdseye, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, broadcast Saturday, May 1st, 1937, in the National 4-H Club radio program by NBC and 73 associated radio stations.

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SALISBURY:

It seems quite appropriate on this Child Health Day program to call upon the people of the Federal Extension Service to report and discuss the way in which 4-H members can build and are building for present and future health. So we present Mrs. Lydia A. Lynde, formerly of the Michigan Extension Service, now in the Federal service, working in the fields of parent education and child development, and Miss Miriam Birdseye, specialist in nutrition. We have heard both of them previously in Farm and Home Hour or 4-H Club programs. We'll ask Mrs. Lynde to open our report and discussion.

LYNDE:

Thank you, Mr. Salisbury. Edwin Ridder, and Mr. and Mrs. Loren Smith of Oregon who talked with us earlier very evidently take a business attitude toward farming. But they also consider farming a good way of life. It is just as worth while to build for the health which will make your work more effective, and yourself happier. So I suggest that we call upon Miss Birdseye who can tell us more about how 4-H members prepare for life-long health.

BIRDSEYE:

That is indeed one of the big aims of club work, Mrs. Lynde, as you suggest, and one of the leaves of the 4-H clover stands for health. The goal of every true club member is to make himself his own best exhibit, and that means an exhibit of good posture and good health.

LYNDE:

And I guess most of our listeners know about the contests in health and the other ways of recognizing the members who reach the highest health goals. But maybe not everyone realizes why health claims so much attention from club boys and girls. You're expert in nutrition and health, Miss Birdseye. Perhaps you'd explain that.

BIRDSEYE:

That can be quickly told. It is because the teen-age boys and girls in the clubs are going through one of the two periods of life which most profoundly influence growth and health. The other period besides the teen-age is the first three years of life.

(over)

LYNDE:

Yes, my own work has much to do with supplying information to parents about developing mental as well as physical health for the future during those crucial first years.

BIRDSEYE:

And we likewise expect that club members when they come to parenthood will understand this and be alert to provide for their own children the scientific feeding and care that will insure normal growth and development during the early years.

LYNDE:

But returning to the 'teen-age years: what do nutrition and the related sciences tell us about how boys and girls themselves may build for a healthy adult life?

BIRDSEYE:

Well, as you've said, the responsibility for storing up health is mainly on 'teen-age boys and girls themselves, not on their parents. Every practicing 4-H member learns the principles of good food habits, and the proper routine for sleep and exercise. And they know, too, the joy that springs from a sense of physical well-being in these vigorous years. Let my part of the discussion rest with that, Mrs. Lynde, and you tell us what the psychologists have learned about the relation between mental well-being and physical well-being in boys and girls and in men and women.

LYNDE:

Everyone knows that a good digestion and general physical health makes for the ability to get along with people. On the other hand, the psychologists have traced many personality difficulties and even failures in achievement back to feelings of inferiority that start because the individual isn't physically fit. In my work in Michigan I have seen many boys and girls improve their work and get along better by improving their health.

BIRDSEYE:

We have discussed why the emphasis on health training for 4-H members.

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LYNDE:

And I'm sure most people understand something of how members train themselves for future physical fitness, and how the medical and dental professions and the health departments of counties and states cooperate with members and leaders. But to make it more vivid, Miss Birdseye, let me say good-bye to the audience, and turn the remaining time over to you to give us some examples.

BIRDSEYE:

Very well, Mrs. Lynde. And thank you for your explanations of the physical basis for mental health. Now for just a couple of examples, showing how health improvement has followed on 4-H club work. It was hard to select among hundreds of county reports, and I want you to remember that equally admirable work is being done in many, many counties.

Here are some figures from Amherst County, Virginia. Doctors and nurses there examined 300 club members. They found that 7 in each 10 needed training posture; nearly all of them needed dental care, and one in each 10 tonsil corrections. In less than a year the majority had improved food habits and 35 percent had improved in posture. And as a result of the examinations, 42 children went to the dentist and had their teeth cared for.

Another report comes from Sedgwick County, Kansas. This one gives typical instances of individual improvement made by club members working for better health:

By carefully following recommended food habits, an overweight boy became much more nearly normal in weight for his build; and an underweight girl gained many pounds.

Two sisters worked out balanced menus that cut down on sickness in their family, which included four growing children.

A club girl persuaded her parents to buy cows so that the family of nine children might have the health benefits of milk in the diet.

And a boy who learned from his 4-H club examinations that his poor eyesight was resulting in eye-strain, secured glasses and greatly improved in his school work.

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SALISBURY: I'm sure you could go on with many more examples, from many more counties, Miss Birdseye. Regretfully, however, I must ask you to continue your report another time -- and to accept our thanks, you and Mrs. Lynde, for this contribution to a Child Health Day Broadcast.

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